

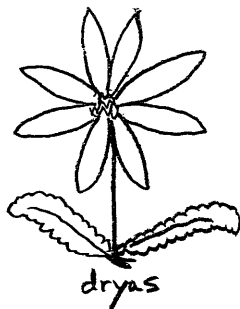
Mountain Ear

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINEERS

JUNE - JULY, 1964
Vol. III, No. 6



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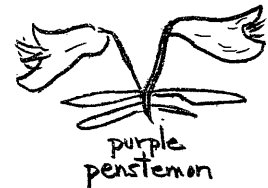


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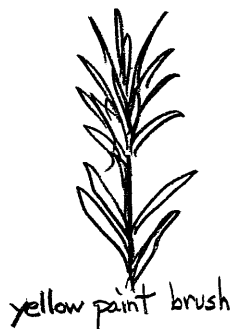


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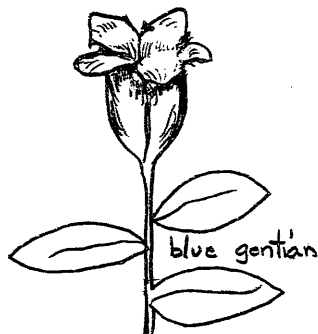
"In the heart of every mountaineer
there is...room both for a very difficult
first ascent and for the contemplation of
a flower."
Gaston Rebuffat



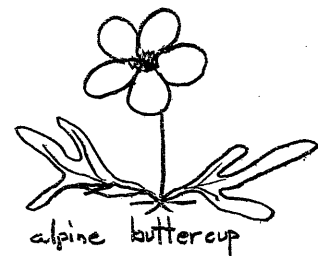
purple
penstemon



yellow paint brush



blue gentian



alpine buttercup

Alpine flowers by Vincent

CONTENTS

Heavenly Twins.....	2
South Kootenai Lake.....	5
Poem by Choate.....	5
Squaw Peak Information....	6
Heavenly Twins Map.....	7
Blodgett Canyon.....	9
Cold Lakes, Missions.....	10
Rattlesnake Hikes.....	11
Foods.....	12
Canyon Peak Notes.....	12
Canyon Peak Map.....	13
Black Hills Needles.....	15

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in the Rocky Mountaineers
Monthly - October through June

We appreciate your contributions of articles, maps and notes
on hiking and climbing.

Elections were held at the May meeting. The officers for the
1964-65 season will be:

Pete Hall, President
John McCammon, Vice President
Martha Ward, Secretary
Sam Braxton, Treasurer

THE HEAVENLY TWINS
(Elev. 9275' - Bitterroot Mtns.)
by Shirl Braxton

The Heavenly Twins lie in one of the loveliest areas I have ever seen - truly a "heavenly place." Sam and I had been most anxious to return to this area ever since Pete MacLachlan, Sam and I had made a day trip up to the St. Mary Lakes in June of '62. That had been a long day (17 hrs.) but most enjoyable. The extent of our trip was climbing to the top of Disappointment Peak (above the upper lake), named by us for we actually thought we were climbing one of the Twins. We had only to reach the top of the ridge to discover that the Twins were a good distance away, entailing a drop down of about 500', then a long traverse before beginning the actual climb. Quite disappointed, we turned around promising ourselves we'd be back, allowing two or more days for the climb the next trip. We've come to realize that in our Montana mountains one must make several jaunts into an area before the peak is climbed. This is because our mountains are a good ways in and also because little is known about the area.

On Thursday, August 22, 1963, Sam, Pete and myself headed back to our Heavenly area. This time we were allowing three days for the trip - one to pack in to the lakes, one to climb the peaks, and one to pack out. We left the car at the beginning of the Big Creek trail at 11:00 A.M. This trail is kept in perfect shape because many hike the 12 miles into Big Creek Lake. There are mile markers to notify your tired feet how long they have trudged and how long they have yet to trudge. Big Creek trail lies west of Victor, Montana, 30 miles south of Missoula.

We reached the bridge crossing the creek in 40 minutes (a little over 2 miles). This bridge is ultra-modern in contrast to most of the bridges??? we are in the habit of crossing. By 12:30 we had arrived at the take-off point up to St. Mary Lakes - a point $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles past the bridge (and approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ mi. beyond the 3-mile marker). Sam clearly marked a tree at this point with orange surveyor's tape because we had gone by his "clearly" marked blaze of last year. Time was taken here for a lunch break. I'm always hungry so am in my element during all snack stops.

From this point, until we reached the confluence of several streams coming from the upper basins, we began a series of finding and losing the trail. There are many, many trails to "where the deer and the mighty elk play"; also an ancient Forest Service trail which we were lucky enough to find quite frequently. Sam got a lot of practise tying his orange tape which came in mighty handy on the trip out. (It really wouldn't take too much effort to punch a good trail in here and would eliminate a lot of sidehilling.) We gained elevation rather quickly on this phase of the trip and were quite high by the time we reached the confluence. In early spring this area has many waterfalls but in August only one was running..or should I say "falling." The trail, such as it is, crosses a subsidiary creek below the falls on the right then drops down through much brush to a larger subsidiary creek. We had no trouble crossing the creek this time of year.

...contd...

From here to the lake there is no trail but a continual upward pull on small converging ridges - all very interesting but quite steep. One can establish a good rhythm step which is my only salvation. I'm always miles behind everyone else - and miss most of the rest stops (upon reaching my buddies they're ready to go on) - but by keeping a slow and steady pace I arrive in good shape (???). We reached the middle lake around 5:45 P.M. and the upper lake at 6:00 P.M. The lower lake is a little off to the south so we didn't visit it this trip.

The wild flowers were not so profuse as on our first trip but still what was blooming was very lovely. Water was also available at frequent intervals.

During the better part of the trip up the weather was ideal for climbing; bright yet comfortably cool for moving; slightly chilly when one stopped. Nearing our destination it clouded over and rained a little. The main downpour waited until I had all the makings for dinner set out in my "kitchen." The food and I had no sooner retreated to the tent when the rain stopped. Once back at my rock kitchen the few showers after this weren't enough to scare us off. By dark the storm had completely subsided and the sky was filled with a billion stars, anyway this is what I was told. I was too comfortable in my sleeping bag to peek out.

Friday we left camp at a civilized hour - 8:00 A.M. to be exact. In an hour we reached the top of Disappointment Ridge, dropped over the ridge and after a long traverse were at the bottom of a couloir, a very likely access to the summit, by 10:15 A.M. We didn't rope up till we reached the top of this couloir. It was merely a rock scramble this time of year.

From the top of the couloir we climbed out a ways on the southeast face. In places it was a little thin - friction holds mostly - but for the most part it was a good class III climb. Sam led, followed by Pete, then finally me.

On the summit we ate lunch, admired the tremendous view, took pictures and read the register which consisted of a tin can and a sheet of paper. I copied down what had been written on the paper. Two previous climbs had been recorded but we know there have been more. We were so sorry we hadn't brought a plastic bottle for a substantial register. I offered to run back to the car.....

Our original plans were to make both the North and South summits. As we were finishing our lunch on top of the South summit, we naturally began discussing the best route over to the North summit. It still looked quite a distance away and Sam thought perhaps it would be too much of a trip over and back. Pete and I talked him into reconnoitering over that way with the intention of turning back by 2:00 P.M. We left the rope on the South summit and ended up reconnoitering to the top of the North summit in 45 minutes! The going was much easier than it looked - a rock scramble most of the way. We were back on the South summit in 35 minutes.

...contd...

We took a new route down - mostly on the southwest side. There was no time to get bored as the pitches were much steeper than on the ascent and we belayed constantly. Pete led, then myself, with Sam acting as strong belayer on the end. I'm always put in such nice secure positions on the rope. Let's face it - they just don't trust me!!!

Coming up we had crossed a lovely little stream (below and to the east of the couloir we ascended) so we hastened to this spot to replenish our water supply. It looked like a storm was moving in but this still didn't hurry us along much till I casually mentioned to Pete that he had left his sleeping bag airing out on top of his tent. The thoughts of crawling into a wet sleeping bag were more than enough to set Pete off at a trot with Sam and I closely behind - well, Sam anyways.

The climb back up to the top of Dissappointment Ridge wasn't much fun - never is after a day's trip. Once on top it didn't take long to bounce down to camp. Pete reached his tent the same time as the rain drops. The storm didn't amount to much even with all the rumbling and dark cloud signs, and before long it was all clear once more. Brave (?) Pete took a bath in the creek before supper. I HEARD the water was quite cold.

Saturday we leisurely broke camp, spending a couple of hours enjoying our campsite. The ground was covered with the prettiest flower, a dark blue tulip-shaped blossom (called a gentian I later discovered). We hadn't seen it fully opened before, because it was either too early or too late when we were in camp. It is so hard to walk around in such a beautiful area as one doesn't want to tread on the pretty things.

While I am recalling our campsite let me elaborate on my dish washing area. It was really quite unique. A little stream of water ran over a sort of dam. This water actually seemed warm to touch, making the washing and rinsing of the dishes quite easy.

As much as we hated to leave, we swung on our packs at 10:00 A.M., then away to the low country. We reached the confluence in $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours, the Big Creek trail at 12:30 P.M. and arrived at the car by 2:25 P.M. just as the rain once more made an appearance. It really had been quite considerate of us the entire trip.

I forgot to mention the large mountain goat that had preceded us to the top of the South summit. We first noticed him from Disappointment Ridge. We think he noticed us too for he looked long and hard in our direction. Darned if he wasn't lying down on the ridge between the North and South summits by the time we arrived on the South summit. He wasn't at all concerned with us till we began our traverse to the North summit...then off he went.

NOTE: Southeast Face Route - Class III

From low point in Disappointment Ridge which is directly above Upper St. Mary Lake, drop down several hundred feet to small stream then climb into S.E. bowl up to the couloir at the base of the east ridge. Climb ridge for one rope length then cross out on to the S.E. face and climb to summit. Climbing time from top of couloir to summit is about one hour. Traverse from the South to North Twin and back is about $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours.

SOUTH KOOTENAI LAKE & HEAVENLY TWINS

by Bruce Johnson

June 11, 1963 found Russ Heliker, Steve Hartman who is an ardent fisherman, and myself at South Kootenai Lake after an eight or nine hour hike. Our feet were thoroughly soaked from snow, creek crossings and rain. This was the second time Russ and I had been up Kootenai Creek that spring. From about 6 P.M. on the 11th to about noon on the 14th the rain dropped on us repeatedly.

On the morning of the 12th Russ and I got off to a late start and climbed the ridge to the west of the lake. After climbing up the ridge for about an hour we traversed the snowfield to a saddle between the Northwestern Heavenly Twin and an unnamed mountain to the west. We decided to turn around and make good steps across the snow for another try tomorrow. We glissaded down a long couloir to the south shore of the lake.

We were welcomed back to camp by Steve who had a nice mess of fish. My parents arrived, soaking wet, just in time for supper. The next morning, the 13th, found us floating in several inches of water so we were unable to make an attempt on the mountain. My parents scrambled off through the wet snow towards home. We stood around the fire all day waiting for the rain to stop. On the 14th we packed up and moved out. About $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles below South Kootenai Lake there is a trail which leads towards Bass Lake. Although most of this trail was under avalanche flows we had a nice hike. There appeared to be more avalanche damage than usual this year. One word of warning, when you get to the top of the pass, don't go around the south shore of Bass Lake, especially when there is an old spring snow cover on it. We changed socks when we reached the road and coasted on down to the Bass Creek campground, ending a good four day trip and an eight hour hike for that day.

TRIO - by Thomas S. Choate

REACHING

On a mountaintop at great height
where few men have ever trod,
The richness of the morning light
makes me climb and reach for God.

DISCOVERING

What makes me leave the world of Man
and climb as high as I possibly can?
Because it's a pleasure to depart from strife
and discover the forces that preceded life!

LEARNING

Does Man have the right
To display his own might
against the mountains of God?
He should have the sense
To learn from Life's events
the value of undisturbed sod.

SPECIAL - Latest reports on Squaw Peak area!!

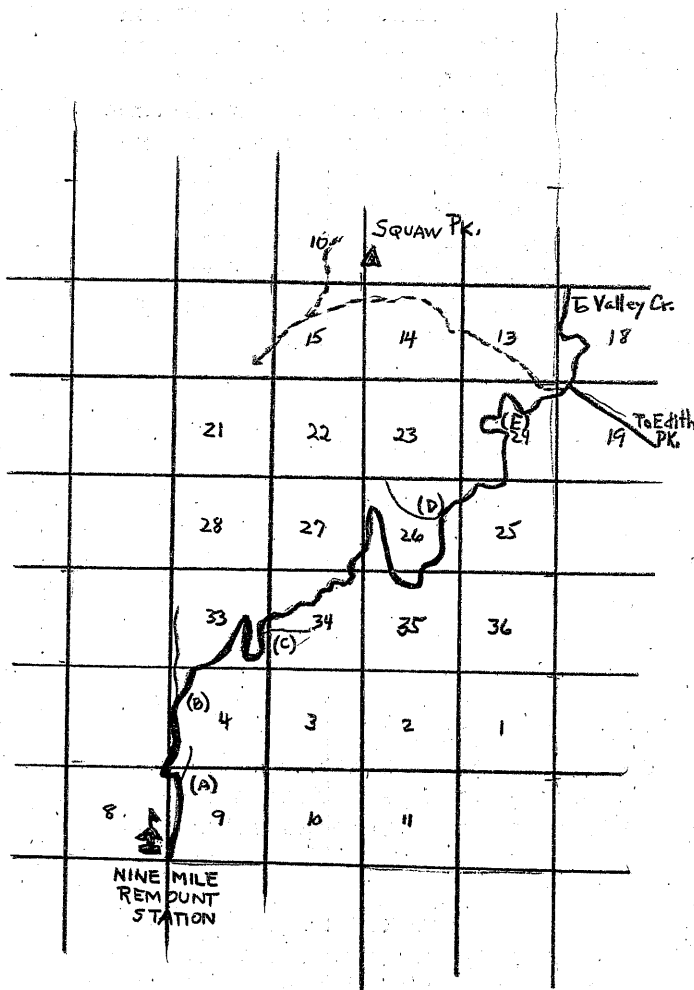
MUCH SNOW ENCOUNTERED JUNE 7, 1964

A party of four attempted to drive up to Reservation Divide where the trail to Squaw Peak (see April '63 issue) takes off. Drifts blocked the road just below the large cleared area near the top. After the 4-wheel drive truck was freed, the group drove up the old logging road that enters the Edith Peak road below this region. This road side-hills across the ridge between the west fork of Six Mile Cr. and Rock Cr. that rises onto Reservation Divide where Squaw Pk. is located.

Due to low clouds, we could not determine exact distances but this is a feasible route. It is very nice ski-touring terrain and was visited one year in May when there were excellent snow conditions. After crossing an area of downed timber we got into firm snow which was constant as far as we progressed (to base of the peak).

Please remember that this year was characterized by deep and late snows.

During this jaunt, the Edith Peak road was found to be correctly oriented on the new (1959) topographical map of the region. This is the Alberton quadrangle published by the U.S.G.S. Below is a transcription of the road from the Nine Mile Remount Station to Reservation Divide in the scale of the 1950 Nine Mile Ranger District map which may be obtained from the Forest Service. You may trace it directly to the latter map.



This road is well marked by brown Forest Service signs on the whole and the correct route follows the better-used forks.

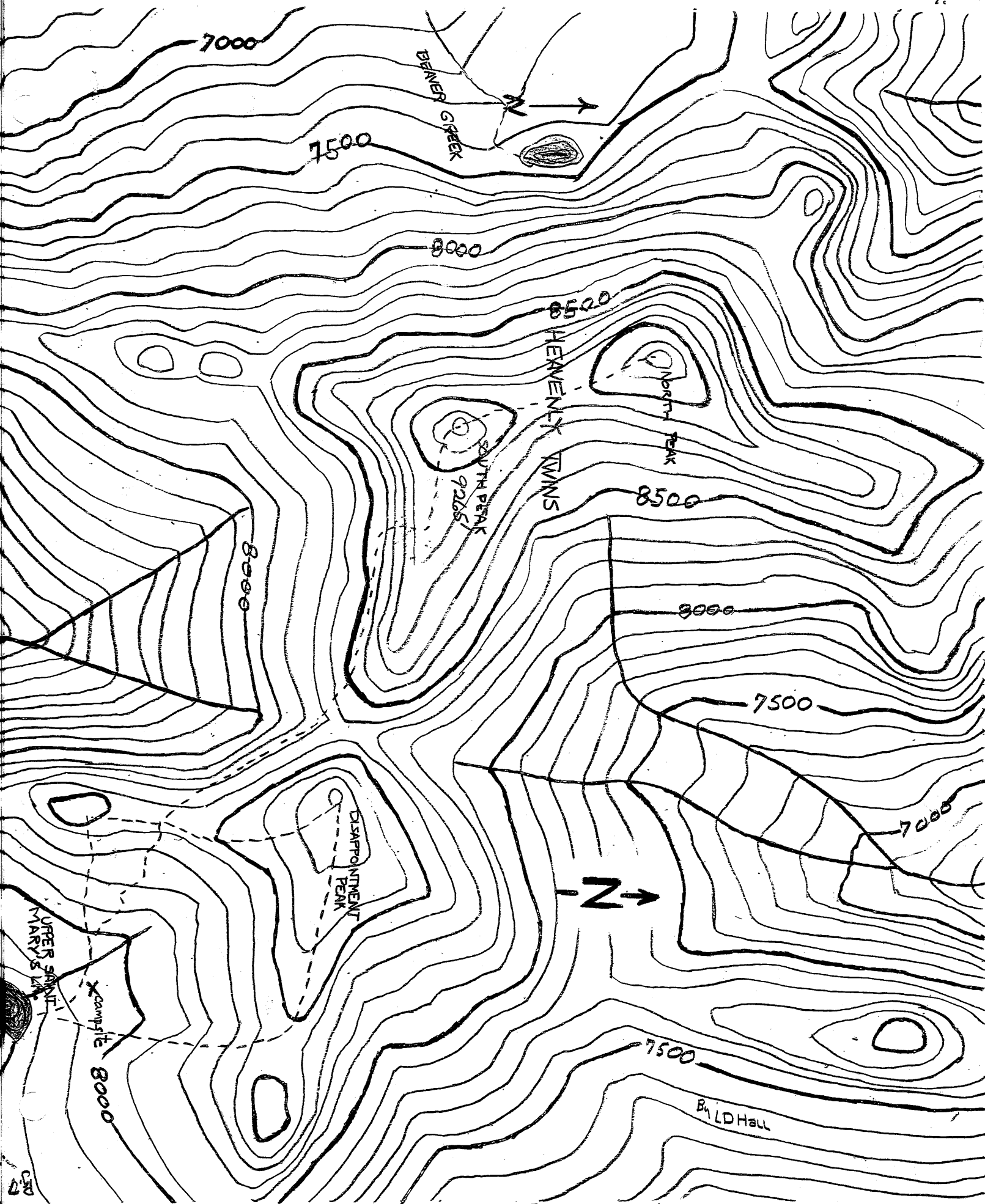
(A) Unmarked fork - keep left on uphill grade.

(B) Sign reads Stony Cr. Cut-off - keep right on Edith Pk. road.

(C) White sign reads Reservation Divide, take left fork.

(D) Logging road on ridge taken June 7, 1964.

(E) Cleared area.



BLODGETT CANYON - HIKING AND CLIMBING MECCA IN THE BITTERROOT MOUNTAINS by Virginia Vincent

This area is spectacular in many ways, IF you can get in there! Right at the mouth there are huge cliffs, laced with grassy ledges. There are needles and overhangs, chimneys and slabs. For hikers the trail leading 16 miles into the headwater lake provides very enjoyable walking. At first it follows a changing stream. Blodgett Creek alternates running through quiet meadows and over raging cascades. Much of the upper half is through forest and is practically level, though at no time are there any stiff grades. The big IF is the access to this lovely area.

Martha Ward and the writer had a Memorial Day hike into this region this year. The problem of a locked gate seems to be solved as there was no gate as in previous years at the end of the county road. However, the forest road into the mouth of the canyon, running three miles, is abominable. A jeep or carry-all could probably negotiate the boulders pretty well. The roadbed is badly washed out and probably accounts for the lack of littering farther along.

We managed to get in two miles but the last grade was too rough for the 1950 Chevy. We left it at 8:30 A.M. and followed the road til its end where the trail begins. Here a sign proclaims Blodgett Pass to be 16 miles distant, Lake Lomo, 14 miles, and High Lake, 10 miles. The trail is typically a forest one, with some stony areas especially over rock slides, and with mushy places in the springtime from numerous run-off streamlets. It follows the south side of the creek and before the crossing there are two spots to be beware of--the first is a fork, one is blocked by a log. Stay with the open trail; the other dead-ends on a rock pile by the stream. The second area to note is in view of the bridge that crosses to the north side. Be sure and cross, then bear right (the trail makes a slight loop to the right to gain a little altitude). An old trail continues on the south side but peters out (we took it and lost a lot of time bushwacking, finally crossing on a log). After crossing to the north side the main trail continues in good condition and arrives at a huge cascade. The remains of a log cabin are here and a short ways beyond is a sign designating the area as Blodgett Falls. At this time of year, we came upon snow and much water in the trail beyond this point. The snow was hard enough to walk on, but the watery places were knee deep. We spent a lot of time edging around the puddles hanging on to prickery spruce trees.

The trail to High Lake (on the south rim, west of Canyon Peak) is marked by a sign which states that the mouth of Blodgett Canyon is seven miles away and High Lake is three miles on ("rough trail" is appended). We judge the mouth to be the end of the road where the first Forest Service trail sign is. Due to the wetness of the trail we did not go further but turned back about 2 P.M. We enjoyed a lunch stop at the Falls and the facility of following the correct trail. We believe the trail to be easy enough to make the whole 30 mile round trip in one long day, but there are many nice campsites along the way and it is a most interesting and beautiful area to spend a few days in exploring.

...contd...

-Blodgett Canyon continued-

Directions: Leave Hwy. 93 just north of silver bridge which is 1 mile north of Hamilton, Mont. There is a Forest Service sign. Follow dirt road toward mountains to a left turn onto a paved road. A large F.S. sign denotes right turn onto a dirt road leading to mouth of canyon. At fork turn left into a rough road.

Nature Notes: May 30, 1964 - Blooming flowers: balsamroot, lupine, kinnikinnick, serviceberry bushes, strawberry, trillium, yellow violet, calypso orchid, fairybells, twinberry, clematis.

COLD LAKES TRIP IN THE MISSION RANGE - August 4, 1963

Martha Ward, Virginia Vincent, and Dave Line joined a one-day walk sponsored by the Montana Wilderness Association. After spending the previous night at Holland Lake Campground in the Swan Valley some 50 miles north of Missoula, they met the main organized party at Condon Ranger Station. From here they drove north on the highway about four miles to the logging road that takes off into the various Cold Creek branches. Following the lead car took them past the many unidentified turn-offs and up the North Fork of Cold Creek (about one hour).

The trail from the end of the road is about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles long and the party of 12 leisurely reached Lower Cold Lake in about $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours. Cliff Merritt, leader of the party, explained the purposes of the Wilderness Association, its many trips, and provided other information. Martha, Virginia and Dave left the others to walk to Upper Cold Lake ($\frac{3}{4}$ hour) and to try to climb a peak beyond to gain a view point. The trail between the lakes was not cleared out, and from the outlet of Upper Cold Lake there was no trail, so that there was much bush-whacking by the time the slopes of the mountain were reached. These slopes were very steep and densely covered with waist high growth. Footing was very poor and progress consequently slow. It was apparent that the summit was still a couple of hours off at their rate of ascent, and that lacking water and sufficient time they had best return. They had, after all, good views out of the canyon and across to the Swan Mountains.

It is Dave's opinion that a strong hiker accustomed to such steep, vegetation-covered slopes might gain the point overlooking Upper Cold Lake in a little over $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours, but only by driving himself hard. The further, higher point to the west might better be reached by staying lower in the cirque and would take an estimated $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours. Earlier in the year when vegetation is not so high would be easier going.

This area in the north of the Mission Mountain Wild Area is quite different from the south end. Precipitation is obviously greater (cedars in the forest) and the rock is of a totally different bedding plan, with 4" pockets of softer material washed out to give a swiss cheese effect. Rock colors are mostly in the grays rather than rust and yellow. Though of lower altitude, it is definitely a "wild" area.

TWO TRIPS BUT A STONE'S THROW FROM MISSOULA, MONTANA
by Dave Line

Rattlesnake Lakes - August 18, 1963

A circle tour of the lakes was planned and Dave Line was accompanied by Velma and Carla Green, Martha Ward and Virginia Vincent. Driving up the Rattlesnake Valley north of Missoula, they took the Wrangle Creek road (west, left fork), crossed the main Rattlesnake Creek, and parked the car at the junction of Wrangle Creek Rd. and Lake Creek Rd. (20½ miles). The route is up Lake Creek Rd. nearly to Carter Lake, and then by trail through the lake region on to the ridge north of Stuart Peak, from which point (on trail #517), travelling north, the trail passes Mosquito Peak and drops off the ridge back east and into Wrangle Creek, joining the Wrangle Creek Rd., returning on it to the car.

Going up Lake Creek, the trail bypasses Carter Lake, Worden Lake, and Roosevelt Lake, which are short side trips, and goes directly to McKinley Lake. Big Lake and Sheridan Lake are more distant side trips. Coming down into Wrangle Creek, Sanders Lake is a distant side trip, while Glacier Lake is a short distance from the trail and Little Lake is right on it. All of these lakes together are controlled for use as Missoula's water supply.

Beautiful weather and good companionship made a delightful trip. We set a leisurely pace, picking goat hair, watching birds, looking at flowers, and resting at lakeside, with side trips to Carter and Roosevelt Lakes, taking 9 hours for the round trip (an estimated 9 miles). We figure a speeded version could be done in 6 hours. These lakes are popular for fishing (which is prohibited in the streams) and we passed Thad Lowary's parked car as he and his grandsons were fishing Worden Lake that day.

N.B.: After leaving the Lake Creek road and going up the trail about 10 or 15 minutes a "T" is met. The left branch goes south to Carter Lake. The right branch goes on up the canyon to the higher lakes.

Rattlesnake Skyline Trip - Sept. 29, 1963

Dave Line was invited by Hal Braun and Jim Gouaux to join them on a hike from Point 6 to Stuart Pk. and down Spring Gulch. Driving up the road to Pt. 6 (Radar Weather Station north of Missoula), they parked the car on the switchback overlooking the Grant Cr. basin. Hiking directly down into the basin, they took a sidehill traverse (steep and tough on the feet) going first east and then north to avoid losing too much elevation or entering too much dense timber with windfall. Rising back out of the basin in a southeasterly direction afforded lots of enjoyable rock ledge scrambling and brought the party to the ridge north of the trail on the Grant Creek-Wrangle Cr. divide, which they followed to pick up trail #517 which would take them directly to Stuart Peak to the south and from there down to the road in Spring Gulch (Rattlesnake Cr. drainage north of Missoula). Here a car had been left the previous evening.

...contd...

Rattlesnake Skyline (contd.)

Dave recommends that others making a similar trip start off right from the first by taking the ridge route from Pt. 6 north toward Murphy Peak, dropping into the cirque just south of Murphy Peak rather than into the one at the switchback on the NE side of Pt. 6.

With rather steady walking, times were thus:

3½ hrs. from Point 6 to meet Trail #517,
On trail to Stuart Peak 2½ hours,
Stuart Pk. to road in Spring Gulch 2 hours.
About 1 hour was spent eating and resting. Total - 9 hours.

This was a walk-thru, and another 2 hours or so were required that day to retrieve Jim Gouaux's car atop Point 6.

####

CAMPING NOTES

Powdered soup - compact for campers. Right Time soup mix is as easy to prepare as instant coffee. It is available in sporting goods stores or by writing to H. W. Fox, Dept. SA, Institutional Products Div., General Foods Corp., 250 North St., White Plains, New York. So says one of the sporting magazines.

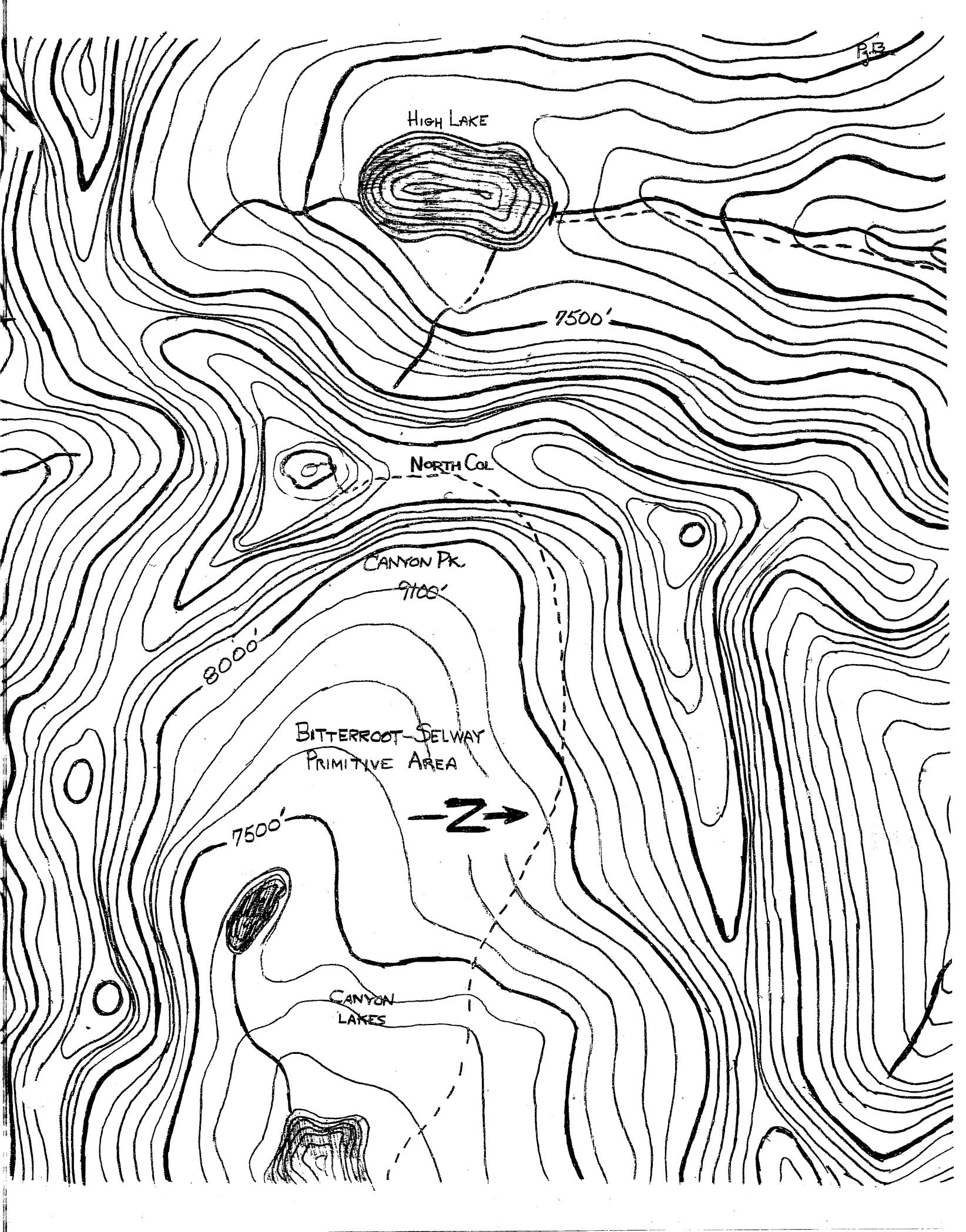
TOPOGRAPHIC MAP

On the following page is a blown up copy of a map of the Canyon Peak area west of Hamilton, Montana in the Bitterroot Range. Included here are notes on the region taken from the Dec. 1962 MountainEar:

Left camp in the vicinity of the third lake about 8:00 A.M. and traversed the north side of the bowl into the north col of Canyon Peak. Roped up at the north col and began climbing diagonally upward (45 degrees) to the left of the north ridge and reached a smooth firm granite down-sloping slab (pitons for safety). Followed this slab up until the north ridge was reached. The summit lies about 300 feet along a knife-like edge to the north. Be careful of loose rock. This route was climbed by Pete Maclachlan and Sam Braxton on June 28, 1962.

Carry rappel equipment, slings and assorted pitons (about 6, 2 angles, 3 assorted horizontals, and a knife blade). This would be an extremely dangerous climb in bad weather - so if caught, rappel down.

##





THE BLACK HILLS NEEDLES

The Needles cluster about Harvey Peak, South Dakota's high point, in bewildering profusion. Of coarse granite, they range in height from twenty to four hundred feet. There are hundreds of rock climbs of all degrees of difficulty, each leading to a separate summit. Variety is unlimited, although chimneys and rubble fans are more numerous than flat ledges and square-edged cracks.

The Cathedral Spires offer the longest and most impressive climbs, and they are concentrated most thickly. Separate ropes of climbers on Spires One and Two, and the Obelisk, can take pictures of each other's climbs.

Another favorite climb is the retable route on Inner Outlet. This is the inner of two parallel blocks at the outlet of Sylvan Lake. The route is enjoyably easy up to the climactic retable, where a forbidding overhand is negotiated by stretching for a real "Thank God" handhold at the limit of reach.

At Sylvan Lake there is a free public campground and a variety of other climbing.

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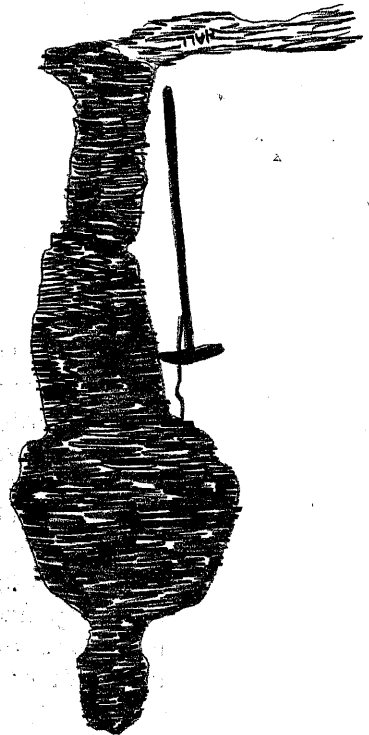
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"The Mountain Ear"

Clark Schurman



I came to a place,
toward evening,
Where a tree had
chosen a view.
It offered a hand with
my tent rope.
In the morning I bade
it adieu.

- Clark Schurman